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APPEAL TO CHRISTIANS,

ON THE

IMMORALITY OF USING OR VENDING

DISTILLED LIQUORS,

AS AN ARTICLE OF LUXURY OR DIET.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

TEMPERANCE SOCIETY IN EAST-HAMPTON, CONN.

MAY 5th, 1831.

BY JOSEPH HARVEY.

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EAST-HAMPTON, MAY 5th, 1831.

DEAR SIR,—

Pursuant to a vote of the East-Hampton Temperance Society, we present you their thanks, for your able Address, this day delivered before them, and respectfully request a copy of the same for publication.

Your's respectfully,

F. G. COMSTOCK,
F. G. EDGERTON, } *Committee.*
HENRY STRONG,

Rev. JOSEPH HARVEY.

WEST-CHESTER, MAY 12, 1831.

TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE TEMPERANCE SOCIETY IN EAST-HAMPTON.
GENTLEMEN,—

I have this day received, through you, the request of the Temperance Society in East-Hampton. It is my desire to contribute all in my power, to promote the Temperance Reformation in our land. If the Address which was delivered by me, before your Society, will, in your judgment, promote the cause in which we feel a common interest, the manuscript is at your disposal.

With sentiments of esteem, I remain

Your's, &c.

J. HARVEY.

Messrs. F. G. COMSTOCK, F. G. EDGERTON, and HENRY STRONG, *Com'rs.*

AN APPEAL.

MUCH has been said and proved concerning the inexpediency of using and vending distilled liquors. But is it not time to look at some other aspects of this subject? Is it not time to inquire how these practices stand related to sound morality, and whether they are consistent with the principles of the Christian Religion?

The CHRISTIAN RELIGION has its practical standard in the MORAL LAW. To this tribunal therefore, from whose decision there is no appeal, must every question respecting the consistency of Christian practice be referred.

And, though the sincere christian may, in fact, fail of *perfect* conformity to his professed standard, still he cannot consistently propose to be *imperfect*; nor can he excuse or justify himself in the least deviation from a *perfect* rule. A plea, or claim of indulgence in this respect, sets forth an inconsistency with the Christian profession, fatal to every supposition of integrity. And no instance nor degree of transgression can be reconciled with sincerity in the professed believer, but on the ground, that, as soon as known, it will meet his decided disapprobation, and lead the delinquent to say, with Job, "*I abhor myself.*"

These, it is conceived, are some of the elementary maxims, which must guide us to a correct solution of the points now to be discussed.

The use of distilled liquors, as an article of *luxury* or *living*, and the traffic in them for that purpose, undeniably constitute an extensive branch of human conduct. Of course, this practice and this employment *must* have some relation to the Moral Law, *must* possess some moral character. Being therefore, in a moral view, right or wrong, they *must be* positively consistent or inconsistent with a profession of the Christian Religion.

Whatever difficulties, those, who are influenced by their own interest rather than by moral principle, may find in determining the question of duty ; the professed christian, whose case exclusively is now regarded, can hardly fail of a satisfactory result. The course of argument for him is plain and direct. He has no occasion to go abroad in quest of a standard of duty. His standard is ascertained, his first principles are settled ; and all that remains to be done, is to make an impartial application.

To the professed disciple of Christ then, is the hand of *christian friendship* presented, and he is invited to a candid examination of moral principle, in relation to the practice in question.

Christian brother, be not reluctant, be not alarmed. The field now to be explored is not infested with *monsters*, or *demons*, to frighten you. A shower of unkind epithets is not about to be poured on your head, nor will any attempt be made to confound you with the dust and smoke of assertion or denunciation.

In the clear atmosphere of truth and duty, however, we find this interesting case of conscience to be resolved. Is it right in the sight of God, in the view of his law—is it consistent with christian vows and professions, to use distilled liquors as an article of living, or to make them an article of common traffic ?

With an honest desire to know the truth and to obey it, let us resort to the great standard of moral rectitude and settle this point.—And let it be understood as a preliminary stipulation, that we will meet the result, whatever it shall be, fairly and without reserve.

If the practice in question be proved to be immoral, and therefore unchristian ; then so be it. If truth and duty say *abstain* from the use and the traffic in view, then *abstain* we will, *totally* and *immediately* ; and that, without *cavilling*, *flouting*, or even like Lot's wife, "*casting a longing, lingering look behind.*" Otherwise, conscience will bear witness where the blame properly rests, if the argument should place any professing christian beyond the utmost reach of charity.

The MORAL LAW being our acknowledged standard, a summary view of its acquirements will be necessary, to shew the points of its bearing on the present subject.

The sum of this law is, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.—And thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*" Mark xii. 30, 31. This needs no comment ; and all that is requisite for pre-

sent purposes, is, to observe the import of the word, *all*, in this connexion. In regard to God, the exercise of our *entire* faculties of soul and body is demanded. This fact merits our particular attention. The law does not say, thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with *some* of thy *heart, soul, mind* and *strength*, or with a *considerable proportion* of them ; but with ALL. And in regard to our fellow men, the law does not say, thou shalt love thy neighbor, when it will not interfere with self-indulgence ; but “*thou shalt love him as thyself.*”

At a glance therefore we perceive, that whatever impairs or impedes the exercise of our natural faculties ; whatever tends to shorten our days ; or whatever in our example, tends to produce these effects in others, or to give them prevalence in the community, is an undeniable violation of the Moral Law ; and, when seen in its true light, must be inconsistent with a profession of the Christian religion.

Here then is the first point of inquiry, now to be examined ; which, in a view somewhat expanded, is this. Does the use of distilled liquors, as an article of luxury or living, tend to injure the bodily system, to undermine the health, to shorten life, to impair the mind ; and thus to prevent the vigorous and appropriate action of a moral agent ? And does the specified use of these liquors tend to produce any or all of these effects in our fellow men ?

If truth shall hold us fast to an affirmative answer in these premises, then who will hesitate as to the unavoidable consequence ; especially if the providence of God has shed so much light on the subject, as to preclude every plea of ignorance or mistake ?

On all sides, the immorality of absolute drunkenness is admitted. But why is drunkenness immoral ? Is it not because this vice destroys health, shortens life, prostrates rational and moral powers, and thus prevents the appropriate service of a rational being ? But degrees in the extent of immorality, do not alter its nature. It is as really theft to steal a *penny* as a *pound*. If the moderate use of distilled liquors, in common circumstances of health, tends to produce, or does in fact produce, to some extent, the same effect upon the body and the mind, with an excessive use, must it not in some degree partake of the same immoral character ? And must not the entire effect of distilled liquors, upon the human system, from first to last, from the lowest point to the highest, partake of the nature and moral qualities of intoxication ? It is not indeed intoxication to the same extent or degree in every case ; but is it not an incipient intoxication,

having the features of that vice in *some* degree? And if so, must not the whole concern possess the same moral characteristics? Is it not part of the same thing? A moral thermometer, applied to this subject, may shew indeed important distinctions in the actual extent of the immoral principle; but will it not indicate the existence of that principle, before it reaches the *boiling point*, or even the point of *fever heat*? Is not the immoral principle in fact, indicated by the very first perceptible effect, and does not the same principle, differing only in degree, range through the whole scale of excitement?

If this be so, and who can doubt it, then the distinction between the temperate and intemperate use of distilled liquors, in common circumstances, is wholly fanciful. It is as really, though not as greatly, intemperance, to drink a dram, as to drink a gallon. The point of inquiry therefore, does not lie between temperance and intemperance, sobriety and intoxication, in those who use these liquors in the manner specified; the only question, is, to what *degree* of intemperance does this use extend; and *how much*, if *any intoxication* is consistent with a christian profession?

The subject has been thus hypothetically stated, for the purpose of shewing its bearings. But, it is believed, that a little attention to the evidence in the case, will change the *hypothesis* into *solid fact* and *sound argument*. To this evidence then, let us now attend.

Our general position is, that the influence of distilled spirits upon the human system, and that the tendency of common use, as an example, are necessarily injurious; and therefore that this use, in all common circumstances, is essentially immoral.

In the first place. As it respects the effect of distilled liquors upon the human system, the truth of our *proposition* is evident from the *nature* of those liquors.

They consist essentially, in a volatile pungent principle called *Alcohol*; which possesses the power of exciting the nervous system, but affords no nourishment to the body in any of its constituent parts.—The simple and obvious fact in the case is, that these liquors subject the bodily system, or a certain part of it, and that a very influential part, to action or labor, without any sufficient occasion. And the only circumstance that makes this labor appear more desirable than other labor is, it is attended with a pleasurable sensation.

But the fact, universally admitted, that these liquors afford no aliment or sustenance to the body, is one of material importance in the present investigation; and developes at once the immoral character

of common use in all its stages and degrees. For this fact presents a clear and broad distinction between these liquors and those articles, whether solid or liquid, which, in moderate quantities, afford nourishment ; but which may become injurious by excess. The latter, to a certain extent or point of use, affording nourishment, are the necessary means of support to the body. They become hurtful, and their use becomes intemperate and immoral, only by the perverted effect of an excessive quantity.

Not so with distilled liquors. They afford no supply or nourishment, at all, to the body. In this respect, they are as destitute in small quantities as in large. Their most notoriously evil effects result from no change, but that of increased operation. The use of these liquors in all stages therefore, presents us with a regular connected series of increase in their natural and essential effect.

It is easy to define *temperance*, and *intemperance*, in regard to the use of *food*, or of *salutary drinks*. Intemperance begins at the point where the *nourishing* operation ceases, and the *injurious* operation commences.

But to attempt such a definition in regard to the use of distilled liquors, involves us at once in embarrassment. And the difficulty arises from the fact, that we can find no point where the nourishing operation of these liquors exists at all. It is therefore impossible to tell where it ceases, for that cannot cease which never begins or exists. It is easy indeed, to trace distinctions and degrees in the effects of distilled liquors. We may perceive that, under their influence, one man is *sociable*, another is *merry*, another *quarrelsome*, another *staggers*, another *trembles*, another is *deposited in the ditch*. But these are only different degrees of the same influence, and therefore, if we were to define at all on this subject, we could only define the *degree of intemperance* actually existing. For this being the same influence, existing in different degrees, it is all *intemperance*, or there is no *intemperance* in *any degree* of this influence. The principle of immorality must exist in *all*, or *none* of its stages.

And let not this conclusion be evaded, under the beguiling influence of a pleasant sensation. This, if it justify the use of these liquors at all, will justify that use to every extent. This sensation is merely the bait which conceals a hook. The bait will soon be forgotten, but the hook will remain infixed.

In the second place. The truth of our general proposition, is supported by the testimony of the great body of *medical men*.

They of all men, are best judges in the case ; and their united testimony would seem to place the subject beyond a reasonable doubt. In no other case probably, would testimony so respectable and so decisive, fail of producing entire conviction. But the medical faculty, almost without a dissenting voice, and with the most honorable frankness and disinterestedness, declare, that they consider distilled liquors as a poison, a concealed but implacable foe to health and life. And they declare it as the result of their observation, that these liquors, in all cases, except those which will justify the use of medicinal poisons ; are uniformly and decidedly injurious.

If this is a correct opinion, and who would think of calling it in question in any other case, then the physical and moral effect of these liquors is in all stages essentially the same. It differs only in degree. And this effect, in all its stages and degrees is necessarily injurious. For surely it may be safely assumed, that *poison* is injurious in its influence ; and that a small quantity is as really *poison*, and produces effects as really *poisonous*, as a large quantity.

The only question that can arise in the case, is merely a question of degree ; how much is the person *poisoned*, or how much *poison* may a professing christian consistently use, as an article of *luxury* or *living*.

And let not this opinion be invalidated, by a misapprehension of the nature of poison. To constitute an article poisonous, it is not necessary that it should produce immediate or violent death. If, by its own inherent qualities, it tend to counteract the regular operations of the human system, and thus to undermine, and finally to destroy health and life, it is really poisonous. Real poisons do not all operate with the same degree of rapidity. Some take the citadel of life by storm, and some by the more slow, but not less sure process of sapping and mining. Neither do all real poisons adopt the same process of destruction. Some corrode the internal membranes, some excite irresistible inflammation, while others prostrate the vital energy. But they all arrive at the same final result, and are therefore all really poisonous. That distilled liquors constitute an article of this general description, is the explicit testimony of medical men.

This point however, is so material to a correct view of the subject, and so deeply affects its moral relations especially ; that no apology will be deemed necessary, for introducing some additional evidence of the poisonous character of distilled liquors.

And in support of this truth, the appeal is made to NATURE herself.

The natural organs of the body possess the instinctive power of discriminating between *food* and *poison*. The former, in a state of health, always meets a welcome ; while the latter, as uniformly excites *disturbance* and *resistance*.

Let *nature* then say, in what light she regards, and how she is impelled to treat distilled liquors ? Introduce them to the stomach, and what is the consequence ? That organ, as if conscious of the presence of an enemy, rouses all its energy to push off the intruder.— And if the quantity be too great to be disposed of in a milder way, the door is at once opened, and the enemy *turned out without ceremony*, the way he came.

Introduce these liquors to the lungs, and that organ, true to the interests of the system, at once sets about discharging the evil ; and thus, by impregnating the breath, betrays the secrets of tiplers.

Let these liquors pass to the brain, and instantly that organ, with all its family of nerves, is in commotion. Exertion is made even to *whirl* and *dizziness*, to expel the foe. And what cannot be thus ejected, is left as unfit for any use. Thus, we are informed by respectable authority, that dissection, after the death of a person caused by gin, discovered a quantity of limpid gin in the cavity of the brain.— Was it there, because the “Golden bowl,” was designed for a gin cask, or was it not rather, because nature knew of no use for the article ?

The same instinctive sense of injury, is manifested by every organ of the body which comes in contact with these liquors. They are every where received with unequivocal signs of alarm and resistance. The very action which they produce, is but the effort of nature to free itself from oppression. And where this resistance will not avail, nature resigns her functions and lies down, like an ox in the furrow, or an ass couching between two burdens.

How comes it to pass, if these liquors are useful, that nature should thus mistake her own interests ; or that her teacher, the God of nature, should have given her a lesson so erroneous ?

No, there is no mistake ; it is in vain to deny what nature thus demonstrates. Say what *we* will about these liquors, nature puts her label upon them in broad capitals, and that label is **POISON**.

Instead therefore of being an article of *living*, distilled liquors are an article of *dying*. For it is no more to be doubted, that this process

of exhaustion going on, the system will fail, than that the glass will be emptied of its falling sands, though they may fall one by one.

Will it be alleged that distilled liquors, though they do not afford nourishment, may be necessary in the process of digestion, and thus contribute to the general interests of the System?

One fact stands immoveably in the way of such a supposition, and that is: *God has provided no such assistance as distilled liquors, in any department of nature.* This being true, it is but reasonable to conclude, that he did not deem such assistance necessary. The whole work of God in creation, which at its completion was pronounced *very good*, does not furnish one drop of distilled liquor. In the stores, which God has provided for human sustenance or comfort, he has mingled the elements of food and drink in such proportions, as neither to injure nor offend.

But distilled liquors, as is well known, are obtained by violence upon nature; by forcing one of her latent principles from its proper combination. Now if this is necessary to human comfort or subsistence, was not the work of creation, as it come from the hand of God, incomplete? How could he pronounce it *very good*, when as yet, there was no distilled liquor to *aid digestion*? How could Adam have a perfect paradise, and not one drop of distilled liquor to *aid his digestion*? How is it, that this so good, so necessary an article, should never have been known in the world till long after the fall?

Is not the allegation, in fact, an impeachment of the wisdom of God? For if the bodily system needs more than he has provided, then his work is very defective.

What would you say of the mechanic, who should send you a clock without a *pendulum*; or one, so defective in its moving power, that you are obliged to stand by, to turn the wheels with your hand, or pull upon the weights?

What would say of the wisdom of your neighbor, who should load his team so heavily, that they could not move on a level road, without the assistance of a lever?

And what do you in fact say of the wisdom of God, when you plead, that he has made the bodily system so defective in its moving power, that it cannot perform successfully without the *screw, lever, or pulley* of *distilled liquors*?

Do you ask, why then was the stimulating principle made? Is any thing made in vain? The answer is, it was made to be used just where

the God of nature has placed it, and in those connexions in which it is presented by the hand of Providence. Or if ever to be used in its separate state, it is for those cases of disease or wounds which require violent agents. But because this principle exists in certain connexions, in nature, will it thence follow that we may lawfully force it from that combination, and apply it in its separate and concentrated power, to the purposes of common living? Can we call the result of such violence, a *good creature of God*? If so, let us pursue the reasoning a little farther, and abide the consequences. A certain degree of heat is necessary to warm the earth, and air, and render comfortable their inhabitants. Suppose then, the heat, naturally diffused over a square mile, were collected to a focus, and poured on your head. Would this be a *good creature of God*? Some heat is necessary to prepare food for the action of the stomach. But does it thence follow, that it would be expedient to collect the heat, necessary for a whole repast, into one burning morsel, to blister the palate? Would this be a *good creature of God*?

But the appeal is again made to *nature herself*, in support of the truth that distilled liquors are *poisonous*.

Nature gives unequivocal testimony in the case, not only by her uniform *resistance*, but by the *marks of violence* and *signs of distress* which she exhibits under the habitual influence of these liquors.

In taking this account, we shall pass *absolute drunkenness* and *sudden dissolution*, because these effects will be charged to excess. We shall be told that every *good thing* may be *abused*. And *abuse* is no argument against *use*. The question is often asked, with an air of triumph, must we leave *eating*, because some men will *eat too much*? This however is mere sophistry. The cases are in no sense parallel. Let it be first shewn, that distilled liquors are among the necessary means of human support, or that at all, they afford any nourishment to the body; and then intemperance, in both cases, will mean excess.

Drunkenness then, in all its deformity and most loathsome aspects, might be adduced as illustrating the poisonous nature of distilled liquors. For, it is a plain question in direct proportion, which every school boy can solve; if one *quart* of *distilled liquor* will produce *deadly inebriation*; what *degree, of the same kind of effect*, will one *half* or one *fourth* of a *gill* produce?

As however, we have no occasion to press testimony into this service, let it be conceded; that the effects of excess, in the use of distilled liquors, do not prove these liquors to be essentially injurious. Still there are effects which cannot be charged to excess, which speak the same language. Nature gives *signs of distress*, and shews *marks of violence*, even under *moderate HABITUAL use*.

To render this manifest, a few familiar examples will be introduced.

Here is a man who has *acquired*, what is called, a *thirst* or *appetite* for strong drink. *Acquired* I say, for this is none of nature's gifts. And this appetite has been acquired by moderate habitual use; for the man never was known to be *drunk* in his life. But some change has taken place in his physical state, which causes a *gnawing*, a *craving*, a *teazing*, at his stomach. And this, at length, becomes so strong, that he cannot rise in the morning, or go to his meals, without *thinking* of his bottle, if nothing more. What is the matter here; what has been done to the stomach, to induce this feeling? This is something *induced*, and something *serious*. Look at the man, mark the distortions of his face, under the *gnawing* within. Is not this man poisoned? Suppose these symptoms were induced by food, or any other liquid, and would you not say at once there is poison, "*there is death in the pot?*"

Does any one say, this *feeling* is a *craving* of nature for more liquor? No such thing. For why did nature not always thus *crave*; and why does she not manifest this *feeling* in consequence of taking food? This craving, as it is called, is nothing but the complaint of nature under abuse. It is her explicit testimony that she has been injured. An inward fever has been excited, and when it subsides, nature complains of the expense to the system, and cries for pity.—In meeting this demand with the renewed application of stimulants, you again apply the scourge, and compel nature to forget her complaint in a fresh effort to resist attack. This complaint you call *appetite*. Egregious folly! Suppose a man falls to whipping his cattle, for the sport of witnessing their efforts to escape. And when they cannot escape, through exhaustion, they fall down and *bel-low*. Is the cruel master to understand this language, as *craving more whipping*? And will he remove the evil, by renewing the cause? The question then returns, what have these liquors, by a gradual process, done to the stomach? For, that some important effect is produced, is but too evident. The true answer

is, through the influence of a *slow poison*, the stomach has become permanently diseased. And is not this appetite, as it is called, the same effect in kind, with that *raging thirst*, which impels the drunkard to all his excess?

Another example.—Here is a man, who exhibits visible marks of some violent agency; and in whose case, nature hangs out her *signals of distress*. See the “*red trimming*” about his eyes, the *livid spots* on his cheeks, and the *unnatural paleness* of the adjacent parts. Witness the “*rum color*,” and the “*rum blossoms*.” What ails that man? Something surely has assailed him, for once he had a fair and healthy countenance. What has been done to him; what has been at work about his face? See his eyes, have they been scalded? See the silly smile playing upon his lips. Witness the state of his mind; the failure of memory, the miscarrying of judgment. What is the matter with that man?

The first answer that naturally and rationally occurs, is, the man has been *poisoned*. His case affords indubitable evidence of the fact.

But soon comes up a more cautious reply. The man has been making free use of *drink*, though he is a temperate man, having never been intoxicated.

Drink!—what drink? If drink has done all this, it is surely poison. No you say, it is *salutary, necessary drink*—the man could not live and be comfortable, without it. Aye, but why then does nature shew these marks of violence? Salutary food does not produce these symptoms. Why does the man, though called temperate, appear so like a drunkard; and why is that evident process of gradual dissolution going on?

At any rate, call the effect what you please, is it not the same in kind; which in a few degrees farther on, is called intemperance, and which makes a man a sot?

Another example.—Here is a man seventy years of age. He has all his days, till lately, been in the habit of using distilled liquors, *moderately*, but *frequently*, and *steadily*. He has used them as a *preventive*, a *cordial*, a *restorative*; in a word, as a universal *catholicon*. And some catholicon he has needed. For he has been afflicted in a degree with almost all diseases. He has been groaning for years under an increasing variety of ailments. Obstructions of various kinds, loss of appetite, *except for liquor*, and general debility have ensued. His course has frequently been to the medicine chest,

which contains always a large proportion of *Rum*, *Brandy*, and *Gin*. In this course he proceeded till he had become almost useless. He had nearly medicated himself to death. And yet he never was intemperate, no suspicion of this kind ever barred his approach to the *communion table*.

But lately he has *abstained entirely* from his medicine, and the speedy consequence is, he is a hearty man. His complaints have fled, his activity has returned, his countenance has assumed the hale aspect of forty; and once more, in spite of threescore years and ten, he is an active, useful man.

What can all this mean? If distilled liquors are not, what is poison?

This man however does not come alone, he is the representative of a host, composed of all ages and classes, who all tell essentially the same story. Will it be said after all this, that distilled liquors are not poisonous? Will any man lift up his head in the face of an enlightened community, and in the face of these facts, and say, that these liquors can be used as an article of luxury or living, and not be, in exact proportion to the quantity used, injurious? Will any one pretend, that there is not a degree of the same kind of effect, in all cases in which these liquors are used? And if it is immoral, totally to prostrate our health and reason, with these liquors; why is it not, in a degree, immoral to do it to any extent? The question in fact comes to this: is it consistent with a profession of the christian religion, for a man to use *poison*, as an article of *food* or *pleasure*?

As an article of *living*, these liquors are removed from all question, by their uniform effects, and by the testimony of *nature herself*. The only real question then is, as to the consistency of using these liquors as an article of luxury. In other words, is it morally right to levy a tax on our physical system, the *whole* of which is due to God, and *required* by his law; when the object of that tax is self-indulgence or sensual pleasure? No matter whether the tax be a *one*, a *ten*, a *fifty*, or an *hundred per cent. tax*, it is nevertheless a tax—the moral principle is the same.

Was it on account of the greatness of the sum, or was it not rather because the tax, in every degree, involved a principle fatal to their liberty; that our fathers were led to resist the duty on tea? They would be freemen, therefore they would pay no tax, either great or small. It was *principle*, not *poverty* nor *covetousness*, that threw the tea into the ocean.

And we, if we submit to a tax, levied by appetite upon the property of our Maker under our care, whether the tax be great or small; are slaves to the one, and rebels against the other. Rather let the distilled liquors follow the tea into the ocean, than give up a moral principle, which lies at the foundation of our eternal destiny.

Say not the sin of moderate drinking is at most a small one. If it is sin, it is enough for every child of God to know it, and his course is plain.

One "*mortal taste*" of the forbidden fruit, "*brought death* into the world, and *all our woe.*" Distilled liquors therefore being medicinal poisons, can be consistently used only as such, and not as a means of living or of sensual pleasure.

Poisons, it is known, may be useful in some extreme cases, as articles of medicine. When some evil, greater and more immediately threatening than the effect of these liquors, exists in the system; and to the removal of which, these agents are adapted; then, under the direction of suitable skill, these liquors, like all other drugs, may be properly used. Of two evils, it is proper to choose the less. It is proper, and a duty, to cut off a limb to save life. But the morality and consistency of this sort of remedy, depend on the real existence of the greater evil. Were the operation ever so pleasurable, what would be thought of cutting off a limb for the sake of that pleasure? Would a mutilated body admit of loving the Lord our God with *all* our strength?

To use these liquors as a cure for imaginary disease, or for disease which they occasion, forms no proper ground of justification. It is only a cover for intemperance. And to use these liquors for the purpose of exciting to greater effort, or of enabling the body to endure greater hardship, is, in effect, the same thing as to cut off one hand for the purpose of doing more labor with the other. Those who practice on this principle find, before they have past the proper meridian of life, their great mistake, and irreparable loss. The excessive labor and efforts of early life, will be followed by premature old age, a broken constitution, and an early grave.

In the third place.—That the effect of distilled liquors upon the human system is necessarily injurious, and therefore their use, in every degree, essentially immoral; is further evident from their influence upon the intellect.

The body and the mind, in their present state of union, as to physical state and effects, must prosper or suffer together. Such is

found to be the fact. The drunkard while he destroys his body, makes himself also a madman, or an idiot.

And the same effect in kind, differing only in degree, attends the use of distilled liquors, in exact proportion to the quantity.

This is so well understood, and considered as so much a matter of course, that no one chooses to commit important business, or the execution of a difficult office, to a man who is in any measure habitually familiar with his bottle. Who is not alarmed to know that his *physician*, his *lawyer*, or his *minister*, is a lover of strong drink? Who would choose to have a *stage driver*, an *engineer* in a *steamboat*, or a *pilot* in a *ship*, a *tipler*? Who believes that Newton, Edwards, or Baxter, would have been greater or better men, from a habitual intercourse with distilled liquors?

And if the mind be weakened, the conscience paralyzed, and the judgment clouded by this means, as they unquestionably are; the affections of the heart must be proportionably vitiated. Consequently, the destructive influence of these liquors takes the whole range of all the moral powers, and tends to lay them all in ruins. Like a fire in a city, it does not destroy a single edifice, merely, but rages through whole streets and squares, and spares not the gold or silver, or precious things, gifts or attainments; but buries them all in a common destruction.

But the law of holiness requires us to love the Lord our God with *all our mind*, as well as with *all our strength*. Is then the least degree of this mental ruin, consistent with a profession of the christian religion?

In the fourth place.—The essential immorality of using distilled liquors as an article of luxury or living, is further evident from a consideration of the motives which lead to this use, in whatever degree.

The motives of the drunkard and the tipler, and the moderate drinker, are essentially the same. Their plea for use is always the same. It is all necessity. The greatest drunkard that ever lived, does not, in his own estimation, drink any more than he needs. His health or his business requires it all. So it is with the moderate drinker, to the end of the scale.

The real motive however, is sensual indulgence. And what is the difference between him, who drinks a great quantity, because he loves the taste and the sensation; and him, who drinks a small quantity for the same reason; only that one gratifies his appetite to a greater extent than the other? They both act on the same principle,

from the same motive, and proceed, as far they go, in the same direction. If then we call one intemperate, or immoral, what must we call the other?

Again. Every person, who uses distilled liquors, as an article of *luxury* or *living*, does, from the nature of the case, expose himself to become a drunkard. He chooses to do this, rather than forego his indulgence. And it is a violent exposure. Thousands and thousands of examples shew that no age, rank, or condition is secure. Many suppose indeed, that they have mastered this Sampson, and put his eyes out; and that now they may make him the minister of sport to them. Dreadful infatuation! In an unguarded hour, he seizes the pillars of health, and moral principle, and buries the deluded victims in the ruins.

And what is the great moral difference, between him, who chooses to be a downright drunkard, and him, who voluntarily exposes himself to become such? Is it any thing more than a different degree of the same vice? Can he be a faithful servant who negligently exposes his lord's goods to pillage? Is not the man who presumptuously exposes his life, by leaping down cataracts for sport, guilty of self-murder? And is not he, who exposes himself to become a drunkard for a mere sensual pleasure, guilty in some degree of the sin of intemperance?

In the fifth place.—The essential immorality of using distilled liquors in any degree, as an article of *luxury* or *living*, is further evident, from a consideration of the influence of this example.

The law of holiness requires us to *love* our *neighbor*, as ourselves.

This requisition evidently implies that our example, after which others may be expected to model their conduct, should be safe not only for ourselves; but for the families, neighborhoods and communities with which we are connected.

Many plead, that they are in no danger from moderate use, because they have that self-command and firmness of purpose, which will resist all undue encroachment. And they appeal to their own example, having survived the habitual use of these liquors for many years.—But all this is unsound logic. For they are by no means safe themselves. Thousands, who have felt and reasoned in this very manner, have after all died drunkards. But if it were true in their own case, it would not shield them from the charge of immorality on account of the influence of their example. For it is not to be ques-

tioned, that example among men is possessed of a mighty power, and one chief means of doing good or evil.

If then our stout, well-balanced ship can navigate whirlpools, or sustain a dash upon the rocks, still the question occurs, will the slender barks that follow us, clear the vortex, or bear the shock? If not, ought we not to steer a safe course, if not on our own, at least on the account of our children and friends?

And if example is to be esteemed moral or immoral, according to its salutary or destructive influence in the community, certainly the open drunkard has greatly the advantage over the tipler or moderate drinker. For though criminal in a greater degree in his own practice, yet the former on that very account, will be less pestilential in his example. He exhibits the vice in all its odiousness, and his example in this degree, is rather repulsive than attractive. To the moderate drinker then, this consideration comes home with peculiar force. The remnant of character and respectability which he retains, gives his example more destructive power. He initiates thousands into the elements of intemperance; and if he does not become to a great degree intemperate himself, he encourages others, he keeps them in countenance, he shields them from all attempts at their reformation; and thus is really chargeable, with a principal part of the mischief occasioned by this vice.

Besides, if it is our duty to love our neighbor as ourselves, we ought to be in a situation to do him good, to reprove him for his vices, and reclaim him from the paths of ruin. We ought to be in a situation to reprove and reform intemperance which is one of the greatest evils in our land.

But who can reprove or reform the vice of intemperance in any of its stages, who himself continues in the use of distilled liquors, and who pleads for the necessity of that use? What can such a person say to the drunkard? How can he reprove his brother in the church, who is falling into this snare? Will he not expose himself to the *barbed retort*, "*physician, heal thyself.*"

In vain does he attempt, by splitting hairs, to make a distinction between the temperate and intemperate use of distilled liquors.—Common sense perceives no such distinction, nature herself admits of none, only as to different degrees of the same vice. Once allow that any, even the least quantity, is necessary in ordinary circumstances, and every drunkard is satisfied: he intends to use, and in his own opinion, actually uses only what is absolutely necessary.

Where then is the man who loves his neighbor as himself, and cannot, will not forego a small sensual gratification, to save his children, his neighbors, and multitudes of his fellow-men, from certain and endless ruin? Let this account be fairly adjusted on the basis of the divine law, and will there not be a fearful balance against him, who serves his appetite to the hazard of all, and the actual destruction of many around him?

Especially let the professing Christian look at this account, and say, is this the spirit of the Gospel? Is this the cross, without which no man can follow Christ? Is this the benevolence which true religion inspires? Will this example reform and save a world of wickedness?

Does any one reply, he shall do as he pleases?

Certainly you will, you must—but know also that God has said,—and he is prepared to support his law, by the retributions of eternity,—“THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF.”

But the question here occurs, “*Is it consistent with sound morality and a profession of the Christian religion, to traffic in distilled liquors?*”

By *traffic*, we are doubtless to understand all the branches of the *trade* in which these liquors are concerned; the *distilling*, the *importing*, the *wholesale* and *retail dealing*.

Respecting this point, to go on safe ground, and to avoid all appearance of *teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men*; we again revert to the MORAL LAW. And as the point in question relates to commercial transactions among men, it must be embraced by the spirit of the second great command, viz: “*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*”

This command, applied to the dealings of men with each other, will shew at least, *two qualities or characteristics*, as essential to moral honesty and christian consistency. In these dealings, every christian must “*do justly and love mercy.*” In other words, *all traffic*, to be at all consistent with a profession of christianity, must be *equitable* and *useful*.

Leaving then, all previous opinions, habits, or interests out of the account; we will institute an examination of the traffic in question, by the standard now proposed.

In the first place—Is it equitable?

Equity means commutative justice; and implies a fair, substantial equivalent rendered, for what is received. And in ascertaining an

equivalent, or settling the comparative value of property, three things are to be considered, viz. : *The intrinsic value of an article ; the common valuation of it by the community ; and the particular value of it, to the individual with whom we traffic.*

An article, to be a proper article of traffic, or to be considered as an equivalent for property received, ought to possess an *intrinsic value*. That is to say, it ought to be *capable* of being applied to some useful purpose. This value can never be affected by the opinions of men, or the valuation of the community. For that which is incapable of useful application, can never be valuable. To deal in such articles has generally been denominated swindling, and must be esteemed immoral.

For example, in some parts of the world, *bones* and *pieces of wood* are sold for *relics* of the *saints*, or of *sacred things* ; and command, through the blind credulity and superstition of the multitude, a high price. But is this an equitable traffic ? Can he who takes his neighbor's money, and returns a *bone* or a *sacred chip*, a reputed part of the "*Vera Cruz*," or one of the "*two or three genuine heads of St. Luke*," be esteemed as doing justly ? Does he act consistently with a christian profession ? Will such traffic satisfy an *enlightened conscience* ?

Much more will the traffic be reprehensible, if the article be not only worthless, but mischievous.

What must we think of the professed christian, who traffics in immoral books or prints ; or who deals in the articles exclusively appropriated to the purposes of gambling ? Does he act consistently with his profession ? No matter how great the demand, or how high the estimation of these articles by the community. They are essentially worthless, or hurtful, and to trade in them is to take advantage of the weakness or credulity of others, for our own advantage, and their injury. It is in fact, little better than *stealing*.

Another principle of equitable traffic is, that we regard the *real known interests* of our neighbor, as well as our own.

An article may have an intrinsic value, to a certain extent, and for certain purposes ; and yet, in other cases or for other purposes, it may be absolutely worthless or injurious ; and therefore improper for *indiscriminate* traffic. In such a case, to take property, or money, its representative, from our neighbor, and return him, what we have good reason to think, will be useless or hurtful to *him*, or what he is incompetent to estimate or apply, is to defraud him ; or at least, it is not to love him as ourselves.

Shall we be told that in *trading* or *commercial dealings*, every one must take care of himself, and judge of his own interests? Who tells us this? Is it Christ, or any authenticated source of divine truth? Plainly not, but it comes from the *self-interest* of the *dealer*. Reverse the circumstances of the case, and make him the subject of the imposition, and he will tell *another story*.

Must then the *dealer* be responsible for the benefit of his customer? Certainly, to some extent he must; or you will legalize all the fraud and deception that can possibly be practised.

In ordinary circumstances of knowledge or judgment, or in regard to articles which are understood, as to their nature and use, the judgment of any individual in his own case, is a sufficient guaranty to those who deal with him, of his own personal benefit in the transaction. But suppose the evidence of an incompetent knowledge, or a disordered mind be afforded, and the moral aspects of the dealing are changed. Who would think it equitable to deal with *maniacs*, or *children*, in articles of high value; or in powerful drugs, of the use of which they were evidently ignorant? Who would think it right to sell to any man an article of medicine useful only in special cases, as an article of *common living*?

But, will not this rule prohibit the traffic in all articles of *taste* or *fancy*? Not at all. These articles have an intrinsic value, may administer to human comfort, and may promote human industry.

If a person should apply to an apothecary for some powerful drug; which requires medical skill in its application, and if he should apply for it as an article of *common living*, the very fact would prove, either that he was beside himself, or that he was totally ignorant of the nature of the article. In either case, to take advantage of him, for our own benefit and his injury, would be unjust.

Is it demanded, whence these maxims of equitable traffic are derived? The answer is, from the MORAL LAW. Let any one feel, as every professed christian especially ought to feel, bound to love his neighbor as himself; and he will find no difficulty in arriving at these practical conclusions.

Apply these principles now, to the traffic in distilled liquors, as an article of *luxury* or *living*.

We turn to the *retail dealer*, and beg leave to ask him a few plain questions.

Your neighbor comes to your store, and brings you property, or money its representative; for which you give him in return, a quart

of a gallon of distilled liquors, understanding that he buys the article as an article of *luxury or living*, and not for any medicinal or chemical purpose. Is this transaction fair and equitable? Is it consistent with moral or christian principle?

To answer these questions correctly, we must go back a step or two to first principles.

Has the article in this view, and for this purpose any intrinsic value? Has it any of the qualities of an article of living? Is the article, can it be, applied to any useful purpose in this respect? Would any man, who buys these liquors for this purpose, be a loser, if he were to pour them at once on the ground? If not, then to deal in this article for this purpose is, beyond all question, to defraud. It is taking property for that which is intrinsically worthless. Nor is this all. The article is worse than worthless. It is a pernicious, ruinous article, which endangers, in the case of your neighbor, all that is dear in life, or in eternity.

Far better would it be for him, if you gave him *sacred bones or chips*, or the most worthless article in nature; for these, though useless, are harmless.

But here, you sell *evil, injury, ruin*, temporal and eternal; and in most cases, you are well aware of the fact.

And not only is this traffic, in all cases of common use, from the intrinsic worthlessness of the article, necessarily fraudulent; but in most cases, it is a known sacrifice of the interest of others. And here, let every retail dealer meet the facts in the case, as they really exist. When you sell to your neighbor distilled spirits, as an article of luxury or living, do you, or do you not, regard his interest as much as your own? Do you really in conscience believe, that the article will afford him any benefit? Do you not often, not to say generally, deal out this article, when you have every reason to believe that it will be an injury, and one of incalculable magnitude? Do you not then intentionally sacrifice your neighbor's interest to your own? But you say perhaps, that the purchaser is, in other respects, a judicious man, capable of managing his own affairs. This by the way, you cannot truly say in regard to a great proportion of your customers in this article. Many of them are known to you to be absolutely mad upon their bottle: the debts they have contracted, and mortgages they have given, with which you are well acquainted, demonstrate that they are in the road to ruin: and that

in supplying them with the means, you are helping on the catastrophe.

But, supposing the case to be as you state, that the customer is in other respects a judicious man; and suppose farther, that this same judicious man should come to you for a quantity of Arsenic, to take before breakfast, as an article of living; what would you think of him? Would you not conclude, that however judicious in other things, in this one point, he was beside himself?

Would not the fact be sufficiently evident to lay you under responsibility? Is not the fact itself, that a man wishes to obtain distilled liquors as an article of *luxury* or *living*, sufficient evidence that he is not in his right mind? It is fairly presumed that no man in his senses, wishes to injure and destroy himself. When therefore we see one adopting measures, which are known to lead to such consequences, must we not suppose, either that he is ignorant of what he is doing, or that some mental or moral bias has perverted his judgment? Do you say that you do not *know*, that these liquors are thus injurious? If this were true, it would avail nothing in justification. For if you deal in the article, you ought, you are bound to know what is its nature, and what its proper use. Can you scatter *firebrands*, *arrows*, and *death* among your neighbors, and then plead ignorance as an excuse? If you do not understand the nature of the article, why do you keep it for sale, unless you are willing to expose your neighbor, for your own benefit?

But how can you make distinctions, you ask, between those who want the article for medicine, and those who want it for other purposes? This you say would make you endless trouble. The difficulty of making proper distinctions, is not so great as many pretend.—For how are the proper distinctions made in regard to other medicines? If no other rule can be adopted, it is easy to require the certificate of a regular physician. But if this answer does not satisfy, and you deem it too great a burden to make proper distinctions, another answer is at hand; and one which you cannot, on any christian principle, evade. Banish the article from your store, and with it all the trouble, yes, and all the GUILT too, which its presence occasions. Turn it over to the apothecary, whose business it is to deal in medicines, and therefore, to make all the distinctions which the business requires.

But you at once rejoin, the step would disoblige your customers.

and injure your business. And more, if you do not keep the article others will, and thus the evil will still exist.

Poor man, your *secret* at length is out. *Your interest*, it seems, lies at the bottom of all these mighty difficulties; and occasions all this *strait* and *pinch* in the business.

Your interest, not that of your neighbor, nor of the community, is your ruling motive: and yet, you are a *professor*, of what?—of selfishness? no—of fraud? no—of infidelity? no—of hypocrisy? no; but—shall I speak or shall I forbear?—a *professor* of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION—that benevolent religion, which consists essentially in loving your neighbor as yourself.

By taking this position however, you have left the ground of christian principle, on which only, it was agreed to settle the question; you have then given up the point, and in effect admitted, that the practice in question is, on christian principle, indefensible. You will be followed no farther, but left on the common ground of all *worldly spectators*, to reconcile your profession and your practice in the best manner you can. If the practice is essentially unchristian, as it appears to be, then the fact that others adopt it, will not make it consistent; nor will our present interest change the moral character of the transaction. If it would, then we may violate every precept contained in the bible, and wipe our hands clean, with our present interest, or with the practice of other transgressors.

In vain will any retailer *now*, attempt to take refuge under public opinion, as justifying the practice in question. For whatever may have been the fact, in regard to that opinion; and however much public and prevailing error may have shielded individual practice, these days are past never to return.

This error is dispelled—truth has shed her light upon this field—public opinion is changed, and the voice of all respectable and reflecting men is nearly unanimous, against the immorality of the practice.

The light is too clear, to admit the plea of ignorance in respect to the moral character of this traffic. Every one then must now stand on his own responsibility.

Besides, it ought to be borne in mind, that in examining the equity of this traffic, we have looked chiefly at the most favorable state of the case, and have agreed on the most favorable suppositions, that ever do or can exist. The facts in respect to this traffic, are in many cases, far more gloomy and appalling, than any already brought to

view. And they are facts which, in a greater or less degree, will unavoidably attend the traffic. They are not chargeable to every dealer, but they are chargeable to the trade, and are among its calamities. If the article is kept for common sale, it will be impossible to prevent all abuses, or by legal restraints to fence off the drunkard from the tap room. The article will be dealt out to persons of known intemperate habits, or they will by some means obtain it.—The store, where this article is kept for sale, will, like a *carcass*, gather around it every unclean bird; so that persons of modesty or decency cannot venture on the premises, without hazard, at least, to their feelings. *Daily earnings*, the *bread of starving families*, *clothes*, and even *implements of LABOR*, will be bartered for this poison. The last *peck of corn*, the *bag of ashes*, the *bundle of paper rags*, made of destroyed garments bestowed in *charity*; the axe and the hoe will be seen winding their way, in the dusk of evening, towards the grog shop. And this traffic is often carried on through the agency of little children, who can just carry the articles; while their parents under the *horse shed*, or at the *corners of the fence*, watch their motions. Thus the retailer of these liquors, is in fact, the *caterer* to the most vile and ruinous vices of his fellow-men.

But, in looking at the business of the retailer, we have been examining the stream merely; it is time to trace this stream to its *fountain head*. In this process, we soon arrive at the *establishment* of the *wholesale dealer*, and the *freighted ships* of the *importer*. One step farther on, we come to the fountain itself, the *DISTILLERY*. Here the mischief takes its rise, here the agent of ruin, in its distinctive character, receives its birth. And while we witness the mighty operations of the distiller, the importer, the wholesale dealer, can we charge the retailer with the whole, or even the greatest share of this mischief? True, those who make and those who put off the article in large quantities, do not communicate immediately with the consumer, and therefore are not in immediate contact with the doleful effects of their occupation. They do not put the fatal cup to the lips of the drunkard, but they fill it for him, and put it in the way to reach him.

True, they sell the article perhaps to respectable merchants, and leave them to do what they please with it. But does not every distiller, every importer, and wholesale dealer know the use to which this article is to be applied? Can he by any means persuade himself, that the quantities which run from his *coppers*, or pass through his

store houses, are required for any useful purpose? And does not the *price of blood*, in a great measure, come back to those who are primary agents in the production and diffusion of the article? Can they then exonerate themselves of the immorality of this traffic, merely because they use the hand of the retailer to pass off to their fellow-men, the fatal cup which they have mingled?

Who then, on any principle of honesty, or christianity, can be engaged in any branch of this traffic? Whatever may be the views of the dealer, the consumer is injured, he receives no real equivalent for what he pays; and this, though a serious, and respecting the morality of the business, an insuperable allegation, is the least, and in comparison, a worthless item in the account of his loss. He is not a ruined *animal*, but a ruined MAN. Not only his *property*, his *health*, but his *SOUL* is lost.

In the second place.—Still farther to test the consistency of this traffic with a profession of the christian religion, let us look, for a moment, at its PUBLIC UTILITY.

To improve the condition of human society, and increase the means of human happiness, must certainly be desirable to every benevolent heart. And it is requisite indispensably, in those who profess to be guided by the example of Christ, and the spirit of the gospel, that, in respect to all their fellow-men, they “*love mercy.*”

It is the happiness and honor of all occupations, which are lawful in the sight of God; and of most that are respectable in the view of men, that they advance the *public weal*, while they afford *individual support*.

The agriculturist can shew the fruits of the earth, the increase of the flock; which, by the blessing of heaven, are the effect of his industry and skill. The manufacturer can exhibit his fabrics, prepared for the comfort and ornament of his fellow-men. The mechanic can shew his implements of utility and convenience.

The teacher can point to the improvements in mind, manners, and morals; which are the effects of his labor.

And the merchant, in most articles of traffic, can shew the beneficial effects of his agency, in the increased facility of intercourse, and the advantages of mutual exchange.

The same is true of other occupations, which contribute their share to relieve the sufferings, to supply the wants, or to define and secure the rights of men. And the consciousness that he is engaged in such an occupation, must be sweet to every christian.

But the *distiller*, the *importer*, the *wholesale* and *retail dealer* of *distilled liquors*; as a *public benefactor*, what shall we say in his behalf? Or rather, not to arraign any man's motives, or assail any man's reputation, what shall we say of the *occupation itself*? What are its public fruits?

Leaving out of view the inconsiderable portion, used for medicinal or chemical purposes; where are the benefits to society, the advance of public interests, the improvement of social intercourse, produced by this occupation? Who is either *greater* or *better* by means of this employment?

Whatever may be the motives of the dealer, the truth is demonstrably certain, that this occupation is chargeable as the responsible cause, with a great, a very great proportion of the evils of intemperance. If there were no distillers, no importers, no dealers in the article of distilled liquors, or if there were none beyond the demand of medicine and chemistry, there would be but little drunkenness in the land. For it is a fair conclusion, that as these liquors are the principal means of intemperance, the removal of them would be the removal of almost the entire evil.

Those engaged in this employment ought not to shrink from a public exhibition of the fruits of their labor. They ought not to esteem it prejudice or ill-will, if such an exhibition is demanded.

Imagine then the fruits of this occupation to be arranged and marched in procession before the public eye. It is not indeed a *cattle show*, for *cattle* have no interest in this concern. It is rather a *tipler show*, a *drunkard show*; a *misery and crime show*; a *prison and goal delivery*; a *parade* of pauperism; a *congregated mass* of solid wretchedness. And to close this procession, we might, and ought to add thirty thousand corpses, in this land for one year. These are the direct fruits.

The indirect, and yet undeniable effects in society, of this occupation; its influence on the peace of families, on successive generations of children; its waste of time, sacrifice of property; and its copartnership with disease and crime of every type, exceed all known rules of computation. Who can tell, or even conceive the number of the tears of anguish; the throes of disappointed hope; of wounded, crushed sensibility, which it has occasioned? To apply arithmetical powers to this subject, is erecting a ladder to the stars.

Say not this is painting. The half is not, cannot be,—told. Here.

fiction is out of place, out of countenance. Here, plain obvious facts set imagination at defiance.

Professed disciple of Christ, view this spectacle, this *Panorama* of misery; and say, is this an employment for you? Has Christ redeemed you from the bondage of corruption by his own blood and sent you forth on such an errand as this? Are you following his steps, when you put your hands or capital to this service?

But, we have as yet viewed this occupation only in relation to time. There are scenes beyond, to which it reaches. We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account of our stewardship. There the consistency of our professions will be tested by the *Moral Law*. There the question will be, not what pecuniary profits we have made, what estates we have accumulated; but what good have we done, what suffering have we prevented or relieved, what temporal and eternal interests have we promoted, by the occupancy of our talents?

And when any shall stand in the judgment, surrounded by families, from which they have taken their bread, and left the wife and the children to weep for very want; while they have returned poison, which has converted the husband and father into an *infuriated brute*; can they expect to hear the Judge say "I was *hungry* and ye fed me?" Will he say "I was naked and ye clothed me," to those who hear many voices testifying against them; that the clothing of families even in the depth of winter, has gone into their hands for the means of intoxication? Will he say "because I was sick and in prison, and ye visited me," to those whose whole business in life has been, to scatter around them the occasion of disease; and multiply the tenants of the prison?

Professed disciple of Christ, view this scene; it is but a little way before you. Let the question come home to the "*secret chambers*" of conscience; spread it before God in your closet; let it meet you at the sacramental table; while you receive the symbols of your Savior's death, the seal of your own covenant vows; *Can you engage, can you continue, in the traffic in distilled liquors?*

If the ground occupied in the preceding remarks be correct, then another inquiry which may arise, viz: "*Is it consistent with duty, for the churches of Christ to admit those who continue to use or sell distilled liquors in the manner specified, as members,*" will be easily answered.

If the practice is, as it appears, essentially immoral, inasmuch as

it violates the Moral Law, in the points of *temperance, honesty, and benevolence*; and if this character of the practice be sufficiently evident, then the question, and the only question in the case is, can persons, continuing in known immorality, be consistently admitted as members of the church of Christ? And surely this question, in the minds of all candid or competent judges, carries its own answer with it.

But, it will probably be asked, on what authority is this particular point of casuistry erected into a test of Christian character and profession? Or who has given power to men, thus to manage the keys of the kingdom? The answer is at hand. The standard in this case is the *Moral Law*. And is not this an authorized and acknowledged standard? Is not this test, as old as moral agency itself? No new test is then erected, no new authority exercised, or claimed. If the decision of the Moral Law, in respect to a point of practice, is discovered in a new or more correct light, the standard is nevertheless, unaltered and divine.

The case in hand, either is, or is not, consistent with christian principle, with moral obligation. If it be consistent, let it pass; let the person be admitted to the church, though his breath discover the latent plague, or he may hold in his hands the "*price of blood*."—But let us first know on what grounds this consistency rests.

If on the other hand, the inconsistency of this practice with christian principle be now manifest; if the providence of God has shed sufficient light on this application of the divine law; then the question arises: is the practice thus developed and illustrated, to be treated according to its real character, or according to the erroneous views of former days? If we adopt the latter supposition, then, whatever advance the church may make in knowledge, she must remain stationary in practice; and, notwithstanding the light which has beamed on her path since the days of Luther; she ought still to be practising all the superstitions of the dark ages.

Is it at all marvellous, that, as the church is approaching the great crisis of her militant state, new applications of the divine law to practice should be discovered; and the stains of former errors be taken away; and thus, that the church should be adorned with white robes?

Is it said that good men have *used and sold* distilled liquors, time out of mind, and never suspected themselves of inconsistency. So,

it may be answered, have good men practised polygamy, and bowed to the Pope of Rome ; but could they consistently do it *now* ?

It is believed that the providence of God has placed the practice of *using or selling distilled liquors* as an *article of luxury or living*, in such a light, that it is *manifestly* inconsistent with moral or christian principle ; and the reasons for this opinion have been given. If the true ground has been taken, then, either the practice, or a consistent profession, must be abandoned. For “*no man can serve two masters.*” “*What concord hath Christ with Belial*” ?

But it will be asked, what right has the church to exact a pledge of *entire abstinence*, in regard to these liquors, as a preliminary to admission. This question may be answered by another. What right have the church to exact a pledge, that professors of religion shall deny all ungodliness, and every worldly lust ? No other pledge than this is exacted. And if this is not proper, then what does the christian religion require as the fruit and evidence of faith ?

But if we debar applicants from admission to the church because they persist in the practice in question, we must, on the same principle, exclude those already members, who persist in that practice ? and a rule to this effect would have the force of an *expost facto law* ; inasmuch as it was not a part of the original covenant.

This objection takes for granted what is not admitted, because it is not true, viz. that a new moral standard in the case is adopted.—The moral law has nothing *expost facto* about it, because it is the same law by which every member of the church, has always professed to be governed ; and that, not according to any given interpretation, but according to its genuine meaning.

And if church members engage to walk by the Law of God, must they not abide its decision in every particular case ? If they have misapprehended any of its requisitions, or mistaken its application, must they not be willing to have their mistake corrected ?

And on the supposition that, in a corrected view of the Law, they dissent and refuse obedience, do they not, with the standard, renounce their christian standing and character ; and ought they to complain, if the church renounces them ?

Must then, every one who will not immediately and totally *abstain*, be cast out of the church ?

By no means. But he must be *admonished* and *instructed* in the spirit of love, and all consistent measures adopted to bring him to a

knowledge and practice of duty. Excision is the last resort, and to be adopted only when every other means has failed.

But, that a practice, so evidently contrary to every christian principle, as the *common use and sale of distilled liquors* ; a practice too, so fraught with evil to the bodies and souls of men ; a practice so prolific in every thing which God abhors, and which none but malevolent beings can fellowship ; should be tolerated in the church of Christ, or be passed by as venial ; is, by the light of this day, and the disclosures to which divine Providence has led, rendered utterly and forever inadmissible.

Can the Christian church be content to exhibit a blemish, which is now, hardly consistent with a fair and honorable standing in the view of the world ? We cannot suppose it.

The consequence is then manifest, that, just so far, and so fast, as light on the subject increases, and public opinion becomes correctly informed ; this nuisance must and will be expelled from the churches of Christ. This conclusion however, does not imply that any special or peculiar means are necessary for the attainment of this end. It does not suppose that any *special vote* of the church is requisite, or that any particular *pledge of abstinence* is proper. Such measures, by overacting, may do real injury to the cause. Churches do not, *by special vote*, say they will not admit a *thief* or *liar* to their communion ; they do not require a person, offering himself, to give a *special pledge* of abstinence from gambling.

The understanding is, that all known vice is incompatible with a credible profession ; and *the pledge* is, to *deny all ungodliness and every worldly lust*.

Now let the use of distilled liquors be understood in its true light, and the work is done : the practice of the churches will regulate itself.

The *votes* and *pledges* already in existence ; or rather we may say, the *word of God*, the *great standard* of all true religion, will easily and effectually decide.

~~Manning.~~

ERRATA.—Page 4, line 6th from bottom, for *acquirements*, read *requirements*.

